Washington, DC — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak voted for two education bills (H.R. 362, the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act, and H.R. 363, the Sowing the Seed's through Science and Engineering Research Act), which are aimed at inspiring the next generation of scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and space pioneers.

"We are fortunate to live in a technologically exciting time. The Internet has bridged gaps between generations and nations. Biotechnology has produced medical miracles. And our cars have more computing power than the Apollo spacecraft," stated Congressman Sestak. "We look at these changes in awe. But we cannot afford to let the opportunities they present pass us by. Success in this information age depends not just on how well we educate our children generally, but on how well we educate them in science and mathematics specifically."

In 2005, at Congress' request, the National Academies of Science released a report, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," which highlighted that the erosion of the United States' advantages in science and technology. Specifically, the report found that in 1999, 68 percent of U.S. 8th grade students received math instruction from a teacher with no math certification of degree. It also noted that in 2000, 92 percent of 5th-9th graders were taught physical science by a teacher with no science degree of certification. To address these concerns, the National Academies made four recommendations along with 20 implementation actions that federal policymakers should take to create high-quality jobs and refocus our energies on science and technology:

1) Increase America's talent pool by vastly improving K-12 mathematics and science education;
2) Sustain and strengthen the nation's commitment to long-term basic research;
3) Develop, recruit, and retain top students, scientists, and engineers from both the U.S. and abroad; and
4) Ensure that the United States is the premier place in the world for innovation.

H.R. 362, the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Science and Math Scholarship Act, was introduced by Science Committee Chairman Bart Gordon, to address these issues by better preparing U.S. math and science teachers to equip students in these subjects. Specifically, the bill increases scholarships for students majoring in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields and who are committed to pursuing teaching. It also establishes a teacher education program at the National Science Foundation to encourage education faculty to work with STEM faculty on ways to improve education for math and science teachers. To improve content knowledge and teaching skills, H.R. 362 provides in-service training to math and

science teachers, and it authorizes the development of master's degree programs for in-service math and science teachers.

"As the NAS report concludes, we must focus increased attention on the quantity, quality, and professional development of our math and science teachers," added Joe. "I am pleased to support legislation that focuses on two very important principles that are critical to the success in this effort: everyone can learn science. And excellent teaching can be learned."

Congressman Sestak also supported passage of H.R. 363, the Sowing the Seeds through Science and Engineering Research Act, which invests in our nation's capacity to innovate by establishing awards to be administered by the National Science Foundation to outstanding early-career researchers in academia and in nonprofit research organizations; providing graduate research assistantships in areas of national need; and establishing a national coordination office to prioritize university and national research infrastructure needs.

H.R. 362 passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 389 to 22. Similarly, H.R. 363 passed by a vote of 397 to 20.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. Congress.

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